

# Protecting Medicare's Power Wheelchair and Scooter Benefit



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- To get this booklet in Spanish, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- ¿Necesita usted una copia en español? Los usuarios de TTY deberán llamar al 1-877-486-2048. Llame gratis al 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

Medicare has become aware of fraud in the power wheelchair and scooter industry. For example, some suppliers of medical equipment try to cheat the program by offering power wheelchairs and scooters to people who don't meet Medicare's rules. Medicare is working very hard with other government agencies to protect the Medicare program from fraud and to help you get the equipment that best meets your needs.

## Medicare Fraud?

Medicare fraud can happen when your supplier gives false or misleading information to you or the Medicare program in order to get payment for equipment that you don't need. Medicare fraud wastes a lot of money every year. You end up paying for it with higher health care costs.

## You Can Help Protect Yourself and Medicare from Fraud

You can help by making sure you get the equipment that best fits your medical needs as determined by your doctor. You can also help by understanding when it's appropriate for Medicare to pay for power wheelchairs and scooters.

## How to Know if You Qualify for a Power Wheelchair or Scooter

People who qualify for power wheelchairs or scooters can't walk on their own and have severe upper body weakness because of a brain, spinal, or muscle condition. To qualify for a power wheelchair under Medicare's rules, you must

- have a health condition that makes you unable to walk on your own,
- be unable to operate a manual wheelchair,
- be able to safely operate the controls on a power wheelchair, and
- have a face-to-face exam and an order from the doctor treating you.

You must meet all of these conditions to qualify.

# Protecting Medicare's Power Wheelchair and Scooter Benefit

Scooters, also called power-operated vehicles, can make it easier for people with disabilities to do everyday activities in their homes. Your need for a scooter must be because of a medical reason, certified by your doctor.

To qualify for a Medicare-covered scooter, you must

- have a health condition that makes you unable to walk on your own,
- be unable to operate a manual wheelchair,
- be able to safely operate the controls on a scooter, and
- be able to safely get in and out of a scooter.

You must meet all of these conditions to qualify for a scooter.

Remember, Medicare won't cover a power wheelchair or scooter if it will be used mainly for leisure or recreational activities. Or, if it's only needed to move around outside your home. You must have a medical need.



**Note:** You have the choice of either renting or buying a power wheelchair or scooter. If you don't need a power wheelchair or scooter on a long term basis, you may want to rent the equipment to reduce your out of pocket costs. Talk to your supplier to find out more about this option.

## How to Spot Fraud

Another way you can help protect Medicare is by looking out for fraud.

Be aware of

- suppliers who offer you a free power wheelchair or scooter,
- suppliers who want you to use their doctors, or
- calls from companies you didn't give your phone number to.

## What to do if You Suspect Fraud

Use this three step approach if you suspect fraud:

1. Call your health care provider.
2. Call your Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier (the company that contracts with Medicare to pay bills for durable medical equipment, like wheelchairs)\*.
3. Call the Inspector General's hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477).

\*To get the telephone number for your Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) on the web and select "Helpful Contacts." You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and talk to a Customer Service Representative to get the telephone number.

## For More Information

Medicare is here for you 24 hours a day, everyday.

To get more information

- Look at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) on the web.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.